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US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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G-0017-P

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

## REILLY TAR &amp; CHEMICAL CORPORATION

TO: MR. R. J. BOYLE - INDPLS. OFFICE: St. Louis Park  
FROM: Mr. H. L. Finch DATE: May 27, 1969  
SUBJECT: #16 STILL FIRE



On May 24th at approximately 2:30 A.M. we experienced a fire on our #16 still. The fire was caused by a failure of our top plate gasket on the blow line valve at the top of the still. Just as the stills were being emptied, the valve gasket failed allowing some pitch to be discharged unto the still. The still fireman reports that the pitch did not immediately ignite but that he noticed smoldering occurring in the insulation. After approximately an hour from the time the gasket failed, the still operator removed a small amount of the insulation from the still to check the source of the smoldering. Upon removal of a portion of the insulation in the front of the still, a flame broke out which he extinguished with a powder unit. A short time later the flame broke out again and this time the still operator used water to extinguish the flame and cool the insulation to prevent further fire.

From his examination, Mr. Justin, believes that damage may have occurred to the valve gasket as the result of our recent fire on #16 still. Mr. Justin has recommended and will follow through that any valves that may be affected by any future fire be disassembled and inspected with the gasket being replaced before resuming operation after a fire.

The damage to the still amounts to replacement of insulation on the front of the still and also wiring to the still. We estimate approximately \$800.00 to \$1000.00 damage and are assigning W. O. 236-B for it's repair.

Yours very truly,

  
H. L. Finch

HLF:ge

cc: Mr. C. F. Leshar - Indpls.  
Mr. S. C. Boyle - Indpls.

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cc RJ Hennessy Lab